

ceive the gift." Their offering, we see, was spontaneous—unsolicited. But how many instances of such liberality do we have under the soliciting system? How many persons of their own freewill and accord come to the collectors and beg of them to receive what they wish to give? This system also allows freedom in giving. Subscribers are so often *tied down* to what they have been accustomed to give, instead of being *independent* enough to give as God has given them!

3rd. Besides deepening the solemnity of the act of giving by making it a subject of serious fore-thought—this idea of calculating and consecrating every Sabbath what we shall give, tends to make liberality a *habit*. Very often our liberality is forced and fitful. Special collection, for instance, often come upon us unexpectedly. If we happen to be in the mood, and have the means, we give—but if not, then the collection is a failure. Other graces require constant exercise to develop and strengthen them, and we cannot "*abound*" in the grace unless we cultivate it. We are always pleased to see the children presenting their offerings, because we know that those who give when they are young will, as they grow older, feel it more and more a pleasure to give. Indeed, whoever comes to calculate the habit will soon come to find liberality a delight.

Leaving the idea of the private devotion—we pass on to notice further some of the advantages of weekly giving, and how very admirably it fulfils all the conditions which should characterize the performance of the duty of Christian liberality!

1. The plan allows *all* the opportunity of giving. "*Every man shall give as he is able.*" Not only are the rich expected to give, but the *poor* as well. Some may regard this as a hard exaction; but we are to bear in mind that it is rather an exercise—or it may be a trial of faith; and also, that poverty may often be perpetuated by mere unbelief in the Divine Providence. The fact is, we do not trust God as we should to supply our real wants,—we feel rather that we must "*look out for ourselves,*" and very often it seems as if He, to

a certain extent, allows us to do so; but in the end, we find ourselves all the worse off.

While the Bible insists on every man "*giving as he is able,*" it speaks particularly of the liberality of the poor. There is the beautiful narrative of the widow of Zerahath; the Saviour's gracious notice of the widow's mite; and the apostle's commendation of the Macedonians, whose "*deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality—for to their power, yea and beyond their power, they were willing.*" This readiness, so frequently shown, leads us to remark that, by our usual method of subscription, we very often do the poor an injustice. There are many who wish to give, but who are unwilling to subscribe, for fear they may not have the amount when the collectors call. Of course the very poor cannot be expected to contribute any considerable amount to be paid at any one time—but on the weekly system they can enjoy the privilege and satisfaction of bringing what they have, and casting it into the treasury when they come to worship. We have heard sensational speech-makers on some occasion saying to the audience, when the Box was to go round, "*now, we like to see a white collection.*" But, for our own part, we like to see a mixed collection, for, when we see the copper coin, we presume that the poor have been proving the sincerity of their love—and, when we see the gold or the silver, then we conclude that some of the rich have been giving of their abundance.

Many persons think they will give when they get rich. But, as Sir Francis Crossley has said, "*If a man does not begin to give when he begins to get or thereabouts, he is not likely to begin at all, as he ought.*" And God's dealings with him very forcibly illustrate His faithfulness to those who "*honor Him with their substance and with the first-fruits of all their increase.*"

We may also refer to another class, who seem to be deprived of the privilege of manifesting their interest in the cause of Christ—visitors and transient residents who are to be met with in all places. Such persons are rarely asked to subscribe, though they would very willingly, and sometimes very